CATEGORY:	Culture
SUBJECT:	Cultural Safety
POLICY NO.:	#25
Approved:	October 10, 2023
Reviewed/Revised:	NEW

POLICY

Children's Centre Thunder Bay (CCTB and/or the Centre) is committed to creating a culturally safer work environment and service experience for the people receiving services. We believe that a culturally safer environment supports our mission, lives our values and enacts our strategic plan. The purpose of this policy is to articulate in writing what we currently understand "cultural safety" to be, and how we will develop culturally safer practices.

Definitions

A commonly used definition of cultural safety is that of Williams (1999) who defined cultural safety as "an environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together" (p.213).

Culturally safe practices include actions which recognize and respect the cultural identities of others, and strive to safely meet their needs, expectations and rights. Alternatively, culturally unsafe practices are those that "diminish, demean or disempower the cultural identity and well-being of an individual" (Nursing Council of New Zealand 2002, p. 9).

According to Health Standards Ontario (2021), cultural safety is an outcome of respectful engagement based on recognition of the power imbalances inherent in the health system, and the work to address these imbalances (FNHA, 2016a).

Creating cultural safety is an important part of CCTB's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion work. We recognize that this important commitment is a work-in-progress.

Procedures

1. As part of our commitment to our Mission, Values and Commitment to Indigenous People, leadership at CCTB will support creating a culturally safer organization to work, learn and receive services within. This can be done through education and learning, policies and procedures, risk management, continuous quality improvement and operational planning.

2. Creating cultural safety is understood to be a work in progress that requires us to challenge and change in how we think, relate and act. Both our EDI and CQI programs will work to measure, evaluate and improve our progress and growth in this area.

3. Training and learning opportunities will be provided to all staff to support the development of culturally safer practices.

4. Clinical peer learning groups, supervision and consultation will work to integrate cultural safety into their practices.

5. CCTB will adopt the following framework recognizing that the process of becoming culturally safer includes three key elements:

a. Cultural Awareness - is a beginning step toward understanding that there is difference. Many people undergo courses designed to sensitize them to formal ritual and practice rather than the emotional, social, economic and political context in which people exist.

b. Cultural Sensitivity - alerts us to the legitimacy of difference and begins a process of self-exploration as the powerful bearers of our own life experience and realities and the impact this may have on others.

c. Cultural Safety is an outcome that enables safe interactions and services to be defined by those who receive the service.

6. The following strategies may be used to enhance our ability to undertake culturally safe interactions with others.

a. Reflect on self, one's own culture and profession, the power imbalances, attitudes and beliefs about 'the other.'

b. Develop and use basic communication skills and simple language.

c. Develop trust with each other, our clients and our community.

d. Learn about, understand and appreciate the various cultures, traditions and ways of being.

e. Recognize stereotypes and unconscious bias, identifying how they impact our perceptions and assumptions.

f. Value other ways of doing, being and knowing.

g. Adopt a holistic approach founded on mutual respect, openness, curiosity and humility.

h. Actively supporting Truth and Reconciliation through learning and action.

i. Acknowledge that there are many ways of knowing, a practice which is supported by using a "two-eyed seeing approach."

References

Eckermann, A-K, Dowd, T. & Jeffs, L. (2009). Culture and nursing practice. In J. Crisp & C. Taylor, (Eds.), Potter and Perry's Fundamentals of Nursing, 3rd Ed., (pp. 118-124). Mosby: Sydney.

CIHI- Measuring Cultural Safety in Health Systems (2021)

Cultural Safety Action Plan (Northwest Territories)

Health Standards of Ontario (2021)

Nursing Council of New Zealand (2002)

BC First Nations Health Authority 2016